a SALUTE to STARS & STRIPES PRODUCTIONS FOREVER

On an unrelated note – Anderson Craig left Iowa during the 1920s to make his name as a portrait artist in NYC. By 1934 he was doing backgrounds at Fleischer Studios. When Fleischer moved the studio to Miami in 1938 Craig joined the background department at Terrytoons, where he stayed until about 1952. Craig then started his own animation studio at 135 Saxon Woods Road in White Plains. Canada Dry was a big account for him.

Keeping the White Plains facility open, during 1956 Anderson Craig took additional studio space in Manhattan at 129 West 52nd. That put him on 'Swing Street' full of jazz joints. The famed Three Deuces Club, where Charlie Parker and Miles Davis perfected BeBop, sat half-a-block east of Craig's studio.

As Anderson Craig moved onto Swing Street, Robert Lawrence Productions on West 54TH Street financed a new animation studio, which also opened at 129 West 52nd Street. Lawrence's partner Ernest Pintoff, an accomplished trumpet player, taught painting and design At Michigan State University before UPA hired him as an autonomous producer/writer/director for THE BOING BOING SHOW. He did LION HUNT with James Whitney, and Mel Leven's FIGHT ON FOR OLD.

When THE BOING BOING SHOW got cancelled Ernest Pintoff participated in Gene Deitch's quixotic effort to re-shape Terrytoons. Pintoff directed the short FLEBUS, animating alongside Jim Tyer. Doug Crane inked. As part of his thought process, Pintoff would sit in his office softly playing blues while Gene Deitch battled studio manager Bill Weiss. Fed up with that in 1956, Pintoff formed Pintoff-Lawrence Productions to make commercials and programming for television, with plans to turn out an occasional theatrical cartoon. Their first clients were RCA and American Beer.

Len Glasser came out of the Philadelphia Museum School of Art with a master's degree in Fine Arts and Advertising Design. Shortly after graduating in 1957 he got an interview at Robert Lawrence Productions. Lawrence reviewed Len Glasser's work and sent him over to Ernie Pintoff on Swing Street. This boded well for Glasser, himself a jazz drummer who'd played with Dizzy Gillespie, Lee Morgan, McCoy Tyner, Spanky DeBrest, James Moody, and many others.

Ernest Pintoff and Len Glasser hit it off. Their drawing styles were very similar. Pintoff brought Glasser in on a freelance basis as a designer. Glasser freelanced for other studios as well. Pintoff-Lawrence Productions caught on. Turning a nice profit, they soon moved to larger quarters at 64 East 55th Street, with an eye to expanding their permanent staff. Glasser shared a room with animator Ed Smith. The fly in all this ointment was that Ernest Pintoff and Robert Lawrence parted ways. The studio changed to simply Pintoff Productions and the money-belt tightened. Meanwhile, Len Glasser and Ed Smith sought steadier employment elsewhere.

Pintoff's tv commercials enter west coast ad market

The first new animated commercials produced by Pintoff Productions Inc., New York, for west coast clients are off the drawing board and on the screen.

At right: A scene from a commercial made for Ralston Rice Chex (and Wheat Chex) cereal. Ernest Pintoff was director, designer and creator of the music. Guild, Bascom & Bonfigli, San Francisco agency, wrote the commercial.

At left: A still from Folger's coffee commercial. Mr. Pintoff also handled the directing and designing for this production. Fletcher Richards, Calkins & Holden, San Francisco, wrote the script and music.

The two commercials represent Pintoff's "entry" into the west coast tv commercial area.

While back at Terrytoons tension between the Deitch and Weiss factions intensified. After Bill Weiss fired designer Ray Favata in 1957, Gene Deitch hired Len Glasser to do layouts for Connie Rasinski. Glasser never worked on theatrical shorts before that, and Rasinski, being loyal to Weiss, wasn't going to teach anything worth knowing to anybody who'd been hired by Deitch. Len Glasser only lasted a day with Rasinski's unit. Deitch put him in Ray Favata's old office doing character designs for TOM TERRIFIC.

When Weiss finally succeeded in driving Gene Deitch out, he busted Len Glasser down to "cel puncher" making holes for cels to fit over the pegs on the camera stand. Glasser complained, so Weiss put him in charge of organizing a storage space at the back of the studio where CBS dumped old* transcripts of Bob and Ray shows, and original Farmer Alfalfa artwork, left to rot in unkempt, water-stained piles.

Eventually Ernie Pintoff called Glasser back to work on commercials while Pintoff had a crew turning out the studio's first theatrical short, in which comedian Carl Reiner voiced THE VIOLINIST.

Jimmy Murakami was designer on THE VIOLINIST, and also animated alongside Jack Schnerk and Jim Hiltz. That cartoon was nominated for an Academy Award.

When Pintoff laid him off a few months later, Len Glasser took a job as Art Director/Copy Writer/Producer for the Hicks & Greitz Agency. While there, Glasser did ads for Ferris Bacon, and a campaign for Cocoa Marsh featuring Mel Blanc as Leroy Lion. One commercial they made for Royal Prince Yams is in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection.

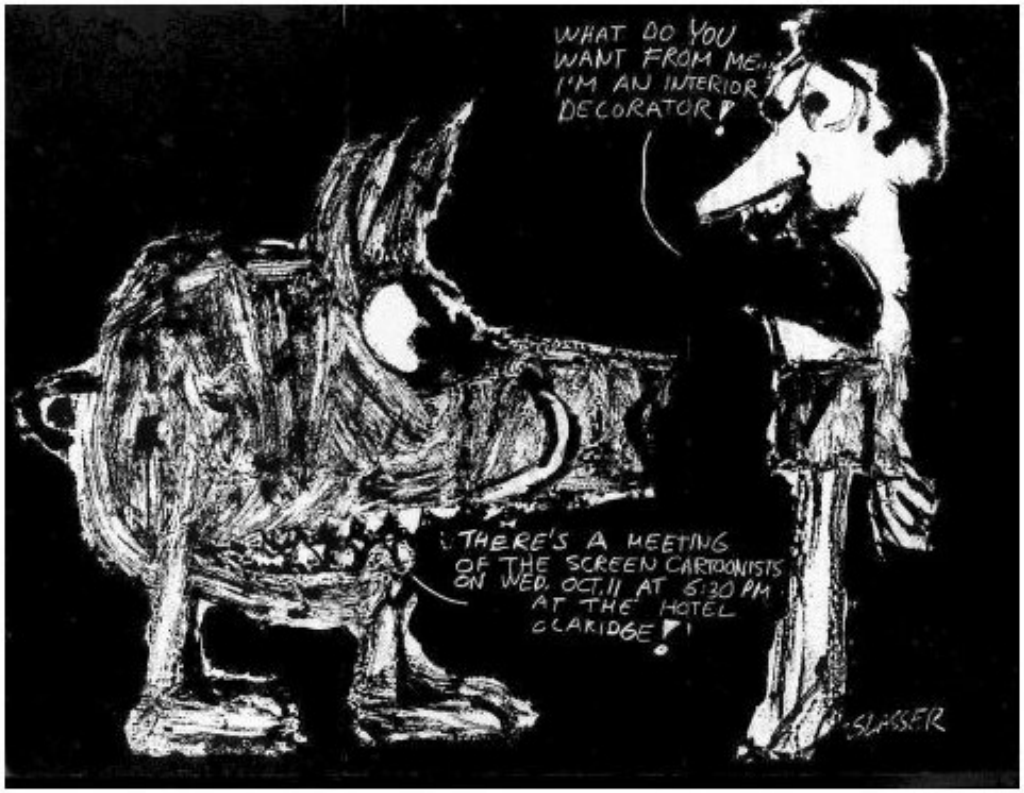
The 1959 Academy Award for Animated Short went to John Hubley's MOONBIRD, which Ed Smith had worked on. Pintoff called Len Glasser back again, to be the un-credited designer on THE INTERVIEW. Al Chiarito and Vinnie Bell animated. That theatrical short had an audio track of humorist Henry Jacobs being interviewed by Woodrow Lester.

Un-credited, Glasser also handled design work on THE OLD MAN AND THE FLOWER in 1961. A huge problem was that no matter how hard Glasser worked, or how much creative input he poured into a project, Pintoff was stingy with the spotlight. In early 1961 Glasser was invited to go in on a start-up studio with Pablo Ferro and Fred Mogubgub but the buy-in money was too steep.

Len Glasser was well-known among the New York animators at that time. He was invited to draw some covers for the Top Cel newsletter by the editor, his friend Ed Smith

:

January 1961

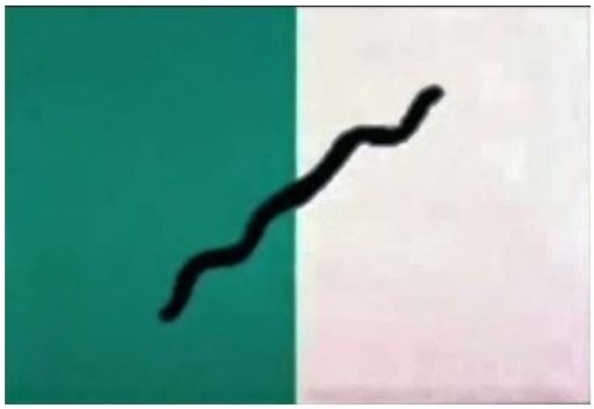

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME!! I'M AN INTERIOR DECORATOR!
THERE'S A MEETING OF THE SCREEN CARTOONISTS ON WED. OCT. 11 AT 6:30 PM AT THE HOTEL CLARIDGE!
SLASSER

October 1961

JULY 1962

Eventually Len Glasser informed Ernest Pintoff he intended to leave. Mel Brooks was negotiating a project with Pintoff at

the time. When Glasser mentioned a really terrible Australian short film he'd just seen run before Fellini's SATYRICON it turned out Mel Brooks had just seen it and agreed. From that conversation, they concocted THE CRITIC, a cartoon lampooning modern art with Mel Brooks's voice criticizing everything. To ensure the artwork was suitably bad, Glasser had Pintoff's cameraman design it instead of an artist.



All this led to the following press release in January 1963:

> **Specialization has been generalized at the new tv commercial production house flying under the flag of Stars and Stripes Productions Forever, Inc., in New York.**
>
> **Leonard Glasser, Jose Ferro and Tony Silano form the company which offers its services for the writing. composing, design, direction, production and animation of film or live tv commercials and feature, industrial and documentary films. The company currently is producing an art film satire, animated shorts and a children's series . . .**

José Ferro was Pablo Ferro's older brother. Basically José rode the coattails of a much more talented sibling. José Ferro's *resume* included being an Animation Director at Robert Lawrence Productions,

as well as at Elektra Films, and at Gifford-Kim Productions. I'm skeptical, based on the fact that his brother Pablo held that title at two of those studios, and José Ferro was later accused of passing himself off as Pablo, who was currently his boss at Ferro, Mogubguh & Schwartz (the studio Glasser couldn't afford to buy into). José Ferro would actually direct the animation at Stars & Stripes Productions Forever.

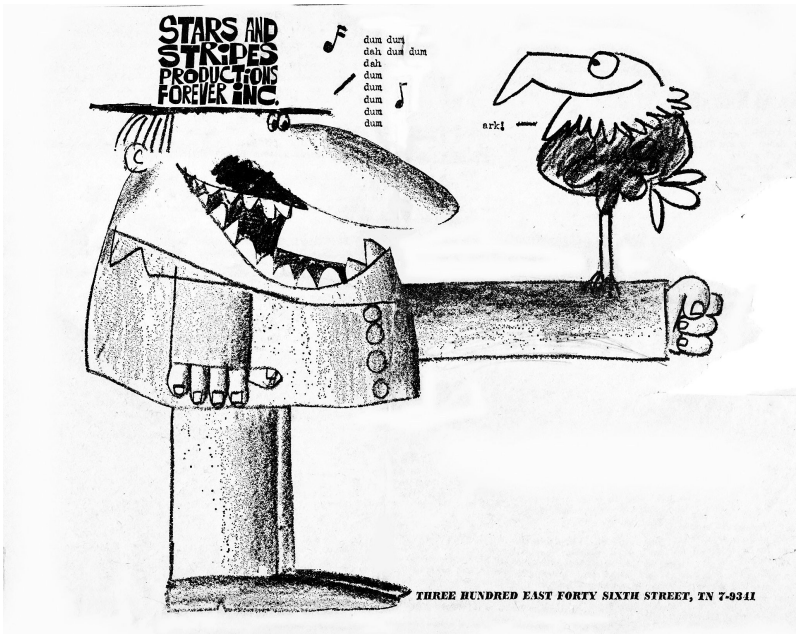
Sales were the reasonability of Tony Silano. This guy entered the animation field *circa* 1950, working at NBC for a while. In early 1960 Silano was at Film Graphics as an Animator/Director, moving on to Eastern Effects as Production Supervisor/Art Director, and in that same year to Robert Lawrence as a Director/Producer.

Anthony J. Silano

Tony Silano left Lawrence in April of 1961 to help start Ferro, Mogubgub & Schwartz as a Producer and Animation Supervisor. That's where he got to know José Ferro. Now the two of them teamed with Len Glasser as Designer at 300 East 46th Street, the Envoy Towers Apartments, where a lot of United Nations personnel stayed. Filmex was in that same building, two floors above S&SPF.

Stars & Stripes Productions Forever meant to reinforce the *avant garde* front mann ed by Ferro, Mogubgub & Schwartz and Pintoff Productions. That year the World Retrospective of Animation in Montreal screened five of Pintoff's cartoons. Clearly the public hungered for something goofy. The 1963 Academy Award for Best Animated Short went to THE CRITIC. Len Glasser's name wasn't even on the film. Well screw that! All he

had to do was recreate that formula – a dash of frivolity – a pinch of disdain -



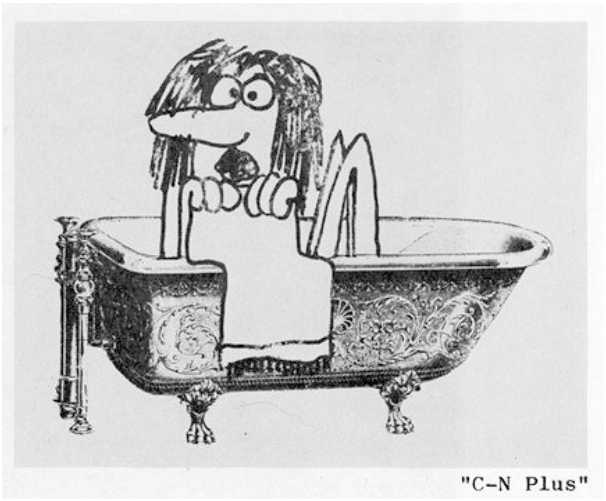
Stagnation nearly devoured Stars & Stripes Productions Forever. No business came in. Tony Silano was a poor salesman. Money was scarce. But the fun Glasser was having! The people he met! He bumped into movie director Stanley Kubrick at Pablo's place. While messing around with Pablo's telescope they realized Glasser's apartment had a better view. They spent the evening smoking weed and spying on neighbors, processing human behavior through a lens.

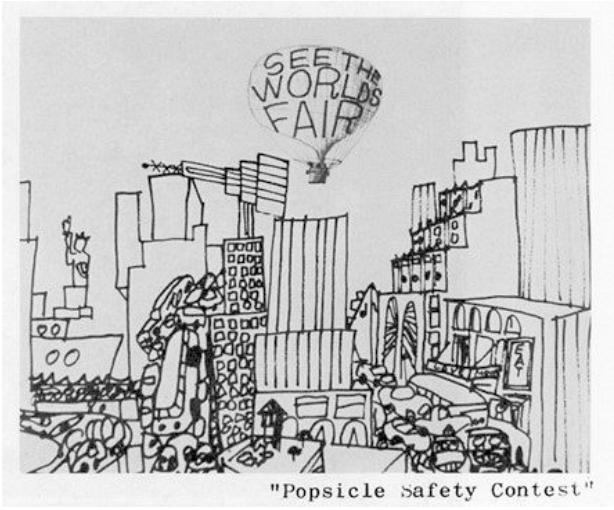
It turned out that Tony Silano couldn't stand José Ferro and left S&SPF after a few months, going to Fred Mogubgub's studio to be Executive Vice President and Contact Coordinator of Sales. Silano rapidly departed Mogubgub for the Walter J. Thompson Agency as a Producer. After a year Tony Silano settled into Visualscope as a Vice President and Account Executive.

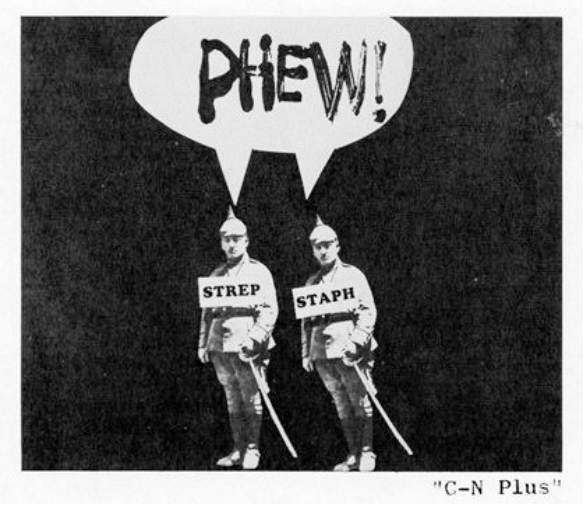
Stars and Stripes Productions Forever finally reeled in an account. They started a commercial for Freehold Raceway, but the client died during production. While S&SPF struggled through 1964, Ernest Pintoff basked as darling of the film festival circuit, taking honors both domestically and international-wise. During autumn NBC did a half-hour show about Ernest Pintoff. Len Glasser refused to lie down. He brought his friend Bob Staats in to handle sales. Bob Staats learned the ropes at Ringling Brothers Circus and years on the carnival circuit. He could sell snow to an Eskimo.

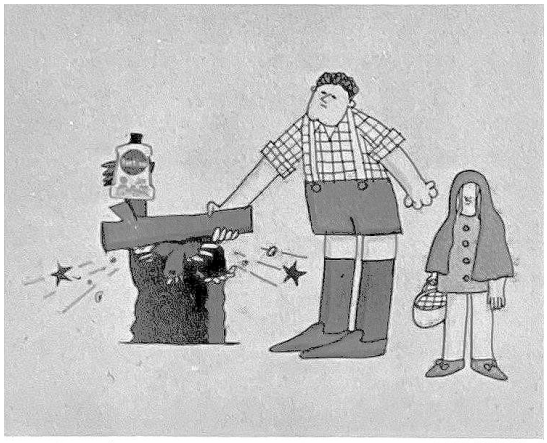
Bob Staats turned Stars and Stripes Productions Forever around. He made up promotional posters for the clients, putting them in cardboard tubes he attached to a small saddle. Staats put that saddle on a Greyhound dog and hired a midget dressed as a jockey to lead it into ad agency offices. He entertained potential clients with exotic tales of circus life, stories of freaks and acrobats. The ad agencies expected kick-back, so Bob Staats presented them with a bottle in fancy wrapping at Christmastime. They'd open it to find soda-pop. Outrageous! The ad agency guys loved it. Business boomed.

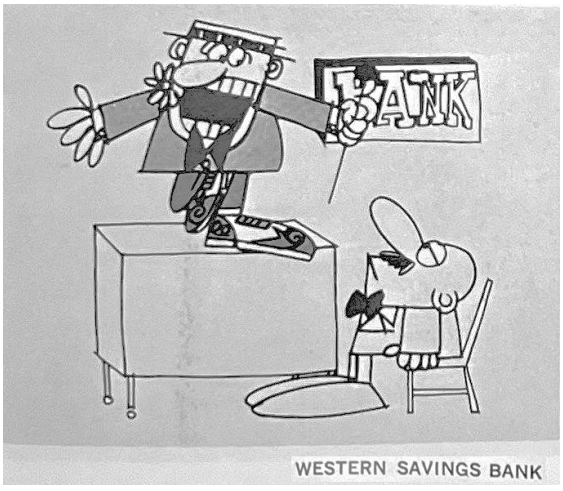
Glasser's oddball style became a staple of American entertainment. A steady clientele allowed payroll for a steady staff. Hal Silvermintz, recently a Designer at Transfilm-Caravel, signed on as a second staff designer, Vince Cafarelli as Animation Supervisor, and Jeanette Debellis as Production Supervisor. A young man named Buzz Potamkin was recruited as a production assistant, punching holes, running errands. Stars & Stripes Productions Forever cranked out teleblurbs.





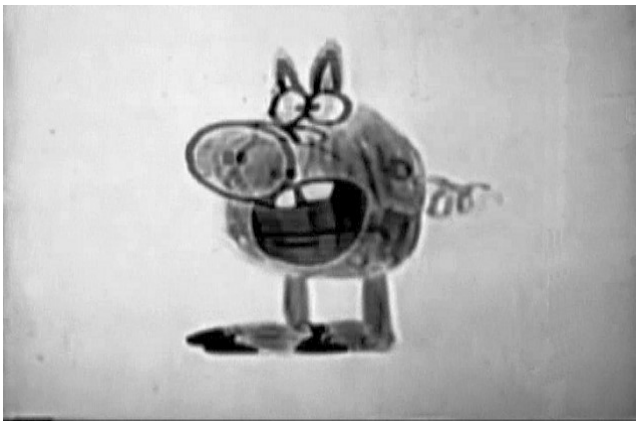






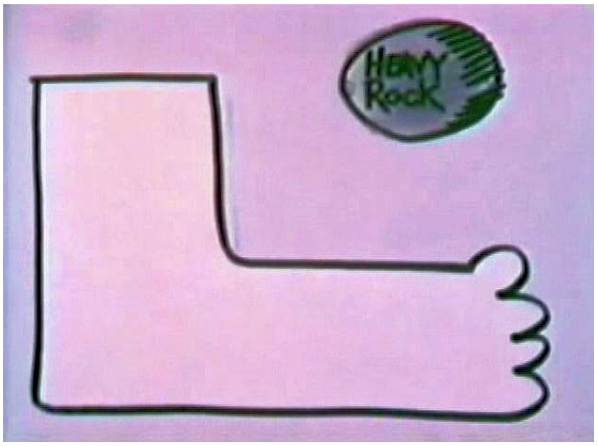
Bob Staats intensely disliked Jose Ferro. One of them had to go. Ferro left and Staats became a partner at Stars & Stripes. At that time Kellogg's cereals used Hanna-Barbera's cartoons to sell cornflakes. General Mills needed to compete for their own Country Corn Flakes. S&SPF whipped up a wacky

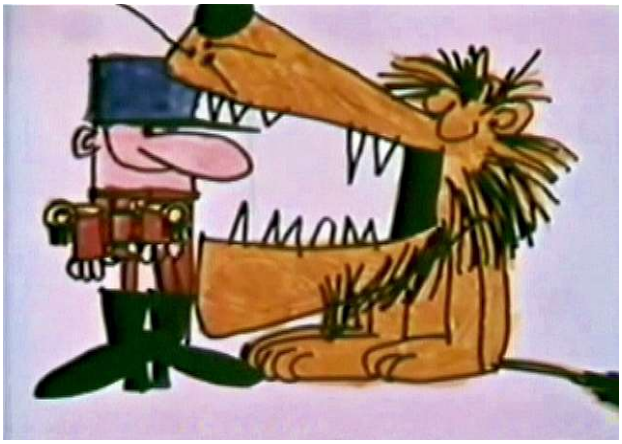
commercial mixing animation and live actors dressed as the couple in Grant Wood's AMERICAN GOTHIC painting. That spot put Stars & Stripes Productions Forever over the top. The couple sang "*Buy our corn flakes*..." in stoic fashion. It ran for years.



While turning out hundreds of commercials, Glasser and his crew made shorts as well. Lehigh Shoes commissioned a film in 1964that would both amuse people and inform about their footwear. Len Glasser delivered the sublimely bizarre SAFETY SHOES. The 'Vinces', Vince Cafarelli and Vinnie Bell, animated with Al Chiarito. Ted Nemeth, who'd been partnered with Jim Henson early on, had a studio in the Godfrey Building on Seventh Avenue, and shot the live-action parts, including a cameo by Bob Staats.

Len Glasser performed voices along with comedians Chuck McCann and Len Maxwell. You may recognize Len Maxwell as the voice of the Chief of Police and Karate in Hal Seeger's BATFINK. The inkers were Fred Eng and his wife Ann beside Tina Paratore. Renowned animation photographer Francis Lee worked on SAFETY SHOES.





Stars &

Stripes' animated short HOWARD played at the Coronet Theater for a year through 1966. Glasser took great pride in that. Senator Robert F. Kennedy is said to have been a fan of HOWARD.

In December of 1965 Stars & Stripes Productions Forever moved to 155 East 35th Street between Third Avenue and Lexington. During the age of horse-drawn transportation the building had been a two-story carriage-house, with a round-about turntable floor. The rise of automobiles caued its conversion to a service station selling Mobilgas. By the time Stars and Stripes arrived it was called a townhouse. Photographer Richard Beattie operated his studio on the ground floor. S&SFP rented upstairs.

The place was a Bohemian haven. Beattie's friend Ansel Adams often came around to drink. Glasser would ride his motorcycle in each morning and drive into the building. Gilbert Ortiz worked at Richard Beattie's photography studio below S&SPF. One day Ortiz went into the back of the shop to use the bathroom but it was occupied. Across the room some guy he'd never seen before was urinating in the slop sink. Ortiz asked the guy who he was. Guy said he was Vince Cafarelli from upstairs, where he didn't like the bathroom. They became friends and Cafarelli introduced Ortiz and his camera into the frenetic world of Pablo Ferro and Fred Mogubgub.

Phil Kimmelman told me a story that took place about 1957, concerning an absolutely gorgeous receptionist at Gifford-Kim Productions. Her desk was in a small room when you came through the door. She would buzz you through a second door to access the studio. Phil got in one morning and this receptionist had the oddest look on her face. She nervously buzzed him through without a word. Phil stopped in the doorway, because he wanted to decipher her perplexing facade, and there was Vince Cafarelli staring up at Phil from under the desk, with a wide grin.-

S&SFP had a Canadian branch called Maple Leaf Productions Forever by 1967.

MAPLE LEAF PRODUCTIONS FOREVER

606 Jarvis Street, Toronto 5, Ont.
(925-5993)

OFFICERS

President	Len Glasser
Executive Vice-President	Robert Staats
Dir. Sales & Pub. Relations	P. Domitrovich
Dir. Production	P. Domitrovich, Hal Silvermintz, J. DeBellis
Production Asst.	C. Domitrovich
Dir. Animation	V. Caferelli
Dir. Film Editing	C. DeSarlo
Animation Design	L. Glasser, Hal Silvermintz
Account Services	Norman Snyder

It seems to have been a sales office, as all key personnel listed were in New York. Their Director of Editing, Carmine DeSarlo started out ten years before at Coastal Film Service. DeSarlo got things done at S&SPF as Studio Manager and Executive Producer. Their Director of Sales and Public Relations, Paul

Domitrovich, had recently been Account Supervisor for Van Praag Productions at 1600 Broadway. Buzz Potamkin isn't listed in Canada, but he'd learned quick and capably supervised production in New York.

Stars & Stripes' sales rep Ernest di Giovanni broke away to start D'Amylar Productions in 1967, opening an office three blocks northward at 155 East 38th Street, with a work-shop at 440 Park Avenue South. Howard Beckerman was head of animation for the first year at D'Amylar Productions.

Journeywoman inker Sydel Solomon went to work at Stars & Stripes in the spring of 1968. Sydel had been around since Fleischer Studios in the 1930s. When the Fleischer studio relocated to Miami, Sydel Solomon went to Hollywood instead, to be an inker for M-G-M on the Hanna-Barbera unit. By in 1946 she was back in New York, lending her talents to Cineffects. Sydel departed that shop in 1947 to take a vacation in Mexico.

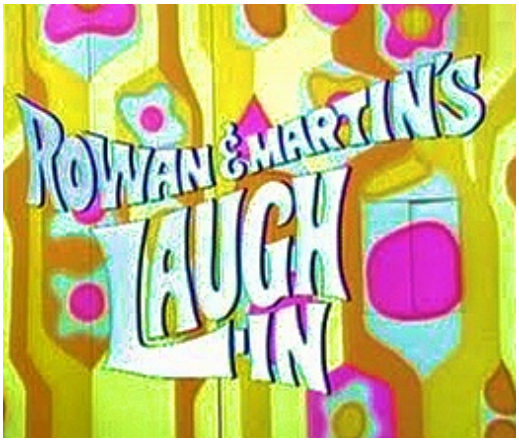
Sydel came home to work at Tempo Productions until the start of 1949. She freelanced for a few months then went to Ben Harrison Productions, and then on to Shamus Culhane by the middle of 1950. Next Year she was at Archer Productions. Sydel joined UPA-NY until spring 1954, when she took a long vacation. Six months later she was with Bill Sturm.

Sydel Solomon started 1955 working for Lars Calonius. 1957 brought her to the Hubleys at Storyboard. Then she was off for a vacation in Europe. She toured Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Holland, and even did some inking for George

Singer in England. 1958 brought her back to Storyboard. Sydel Solomon ranked in the top tier and found steady employment when many could not. Howard Basin found her too high strung. Howard Beckerman said she reminded him of comedic actress ZaSu Pitts. Elisa Solon agrees that 'snooty' would be the right word. Sydel joined the old hands flocking to Hal Seeger Productions in 1966. She worked for Rankin/Bass on the feature-length THE WACKY WORLD OF MOTHER GOOSE in 1967, and then over to S&SPF, where about three dozen I&P ladies were employed. Business was good!

Maybe too good! Hal Silvermintz and Buzz Potamkin went off in 1968 to form Perpetual Motion Pictures at 160 Madison Avenue. Bob Staats had a little acting career going on, with a bit part in Robert Downey's 1969 movie PUTNEY SWOPE. Staats also appeared with Chuck McCann on the experimental TV comedy show TURN-ON. Several ABC affiliates refused to run the show. Only one episode ever aired.

George Schlatter, one of the producers of TURN-ON, was then involved in the very popular show LAUGH-IN. Those were crazy times. Drugs fueled the culture and psychedelia infiltrated the mainstream. Lots of bright colors and weird angles on the clothing. Fashion-wise they called it "Mod". Stars and Stripes Productions Forever created animated effects for the ultra-hip LAUGH-IN, but most of it ended up on the cutting-room floor.

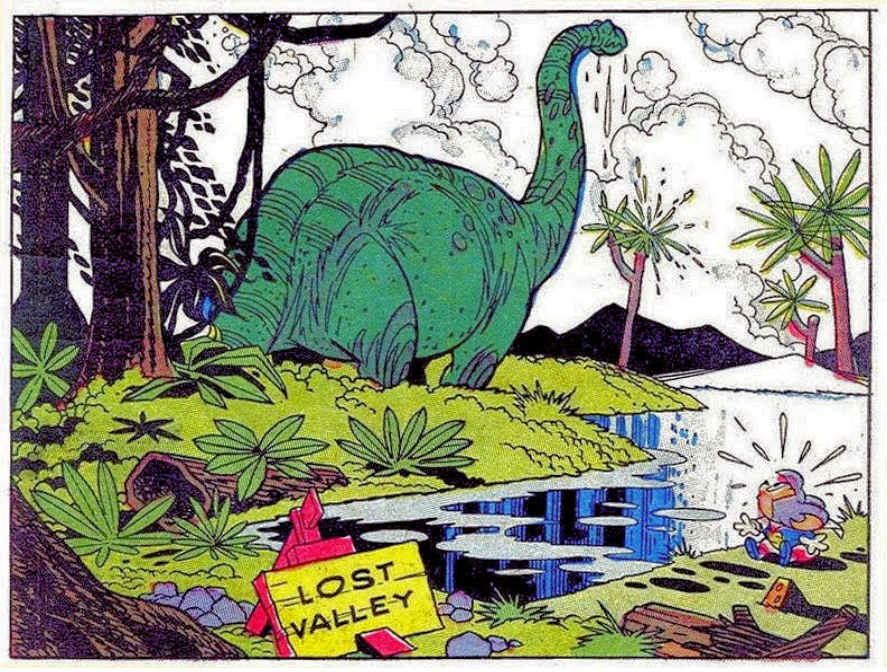


Ernest Pintoff wholeheartedly embraced network television. He ditched animation for a career directing episodes of classic TV dramas such as: THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN; BARNABY JONES; POLICE WOMAN; KOJAK; THE BIONIC WOMAN; HAWAII FIVE-0; THE WHITE

SHADOW; THE DUKES OF HAZZARD; FALCON CREST; KNOTS LANDING; DALLAS; and MacGYVER.

Truth be told, Len Glasser saw potential in TV network employment as well. That cornflake commercial still ran in major markets. Glasser's stock rose again when ASIFA East began an annual film festival in 1969, with awards called the Peggys. At the first ceremony Stars & Stripes Productions Forever won a Peggy for Best Film with DESERT, done for Sparklettes, as well as second place in Design with LOOP THE LOOP, done for Jackie Morgan. LOOP THE LOOP also took a third place Peggy for Technique.

Milt Stein animated at S&SPF for part of 1969. Others in the industry considered Milt Stein an odd duck. Howard Basin knew Stein well, and tells me that paranoid-schizophrenia was at the root of the trouble. Born 1921 in New York, Stein started at Terrytoons, leaving in 1944 as an inbetweener. At that time Standard Comics published a character named Super Mouse, causing Terrytoons to change its version to Mighty Mouse. Milt Stein opened his own studio atop a Lexington Avenue skyscraper to draw comic books for Standard and other companies. Stein's work on SUPER MOUSE is awesome.



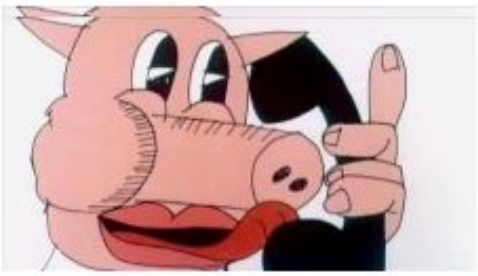
Stein returned to Famous in 1953 but didn't stay long. He joined the Screen Cartoonists Guild in October 1954. Over the next couple of years Top Cel places Milt Stein at Academy Pictures, Lars Calonius Productions, Bill Sturm Studios, and Hankinson Studio. Howard Basis remembers working alongside Stein for Lew Gifford. One morning Stein came in babbling about people being after him. Stein wanted to sleep on Howard Basis's lawn so his imaginary stalkers couldn't find him. Paul Kim told Basis and Ken Kimmelman to take Stein to St. Vincent's Hospital for observation. When Stein slipped out Basis nearly got snatched up in his place .

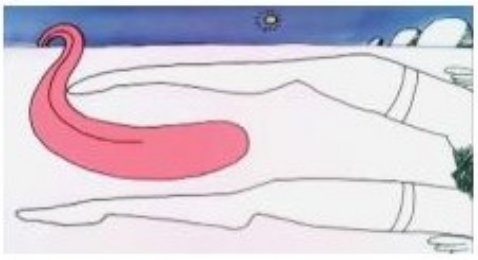
Stein worked on FELIX THE CAT in 1960, and the Rankin/Bass feature RETURN TO OZ in 1964. An incident at Hal Seeger's shop around 1967 made Milt Stein something of a folk hero among animators. It seems Stein did a bunch of inbetweens that were placed into a stack of in-between pages others had drawn for the same scene. Stein got into an argument with Seeger over withheld pay. That night Stein broke into Seeger's studio to separate his own pages from the pile and tear each one up. Stein's next steady gig was with Steve Krantz for THE MIGHTY THOR, then on to Stars & Stripes. Milt Stein soon returned to freelancing.

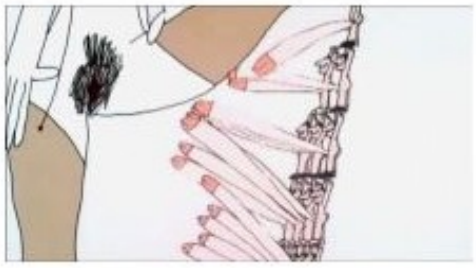
There was no shortage of lunacy in the animation business. Because men landed on the moon that July, Glasser figured it to be time for a shift in the way our culture conducted business. He put Astrologer Ruth Robins on staff, explaining that her duties included "planning outdoor filming schedules so that inclement weather is avoided, hiring talent, choosing the most propitious days for client presentations, and hiring new personnel for Stars & Stripes."

When the Establishment Theatre Company produced author Jack Gelber's SQUARE IN THE EYE at Theatre De Lys in 1970 they included filmed snippets directed by Len Glasser. TIME Magazine's review declared:'A theatrical kaleidoscope with film sequences, stills and pop artifacts, Square in the Eye tickles the ribs to stab the brain'.

S&SPF did animated sequences for a pornographic feature film starring LAUGH-IN regular Sarah Kennedy. THE TELEPHONE BOOK from Embassy Pictures contains an X-Rated cartoon sequence, the first ever shown in American theaters.







Len Glasser was heavily involved with the film as a writer, producer, designer, and even directed parts of it.

Glasser was ready to move on. Others were too. Paul Domitrovich jumped ship to become Eastern Sales Manager for Cascade Pictures of California. In September of 1971 Vince Cafarelli and Carmine De Sarlo teamed with a guy named Charles Cody to found America's Favorite Film Company a block away at 235 East 46th Street. Cafarelli acted as Animation Director and Head of Creative Services. DeSarlo was Production Manager. Cody handled Sales and Live Production.

Two years earlier Charles Cody had been involved with George Cannata in founding E.C.A. Animation at 28 East 44th Street. Don't know if he was still part of that, but Cody obviously wanted to buy into the animation game. Bob Staats was good at hustling-up investors. He'd find them in bars, convincing the drunken fellow he'd earn big rewards with a stake in S&SPF. Nick Chinn liked the *schpiel*.

Len Glasser sold his interest in Stars & Stripes Productions Forever to Nick Chinn. Glasser went to work for Lou Dorfsman, the Senior Vice President, as well as Creative Director for Marketing Communications and Design at CBS Television. Glasser was Dorfsman's special assistant. He designed some sports and weather promos for the network.

Len Glasser got involved with Perpetual Motion Pictures where he and Hal Silvermintz created THE HAL AND LEN SHOW, a spoof of sports using five to seven minute intersitials. For

1972 Glasser wrote, designed, and directed the campy live-action short THE BASEBALL WORLD OF JOE GARAGIOLA,

Video Productions Incorporated had been around twenty-three years, when in 1971 VPI became a sub-division of the Electrographic Corporation. Two years later VPI formed a subsidiary called the Director's Center in a boutique of sweets at the Sheraton Hotel. John Corless was Vice President and Executive Director there. A decade back Corless had been 'additional crew' on the syndicated sitcom MACK & MYER FOR HIRE. More than a hundred episodes, each running twelve minute, had been made between 1964-1965. 'Grandpa' Al Lewis was in five of them.

The Director's Center billed itself as an international service for directors and producers, offering complete production and post-production facilities and personnel. Len Glasser joined them to make commercials. Glasser also created an opening for THE DAVID STEINBERG SHOW.

Bob Staats was still handling the money for Stars & Stripes Productions Forever in 1974. Carmine DeSarlo was there as a producer. America's Favorite Film Company unraveled that year. Vince Cafarelli went over to Perpetual Motion Pictures, which was riding high. It was an on-going game of employment musical-chairs common in the biz. A number of New York's best animators were on TUBBY THE TUBA, Milt Stein among them. Sydel Solomon was back with the Hubleys as a Checker on the artsy short COCKABOODY. She performed those same duties for Focus Designs on THE MAD MAGAZINE TV SPECIAL.

The promotional short SAFETY SHOES that Glasser and company made a decade earlier had become a cult classic. Joe Sedelmaier, the hot-shot ad-man who contributed "Where's the BEEF?" to our

cultural cacophony of catch-phrases, was a hardcore fan of SAFETY SHOES. 16mm prints were shown to new guys at the agencies, followed by stories of how wide open the industry used to be.

Len Glasser kept on with the Director's Center until 1977, around the time Milt Stein committed suicide. Len Glasser moved to California and worked for Fred Calvert's Farmhouse Films doing layouts for I AM THE GREATEST: THE ADVENTURES OF MOHAMMAD ALI. The show ran on NBC Saturday mornings with champion boxer Mohammad Ali doing his own voice. The show's IMDb page has Glasser as Animation Director, with Floyd Norman doing Layouts. It is alleged that after thirteen episodes saw completion Fred Calvert absconded to South America with Mohammad Ali's money.

In 1979 Glasser painted backgrounds for JANA OF THE JUNGLE at Hanna-Barbera. Carl Urbano and Ray Patterson were the series directors. One of them canned Glasser because a lot of younger artists would hang around his desk watching him work. JANA only lasted 13 episodes on NBC.

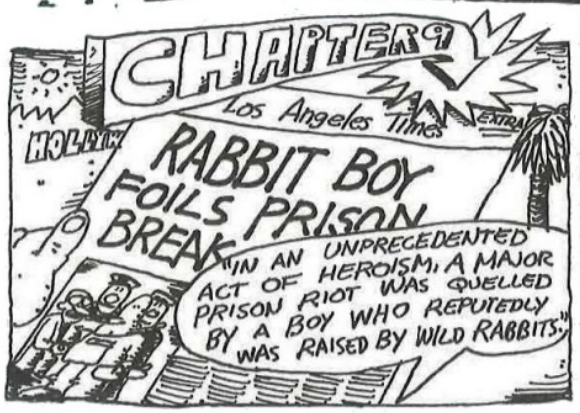
Glasser quickly found work with Robert Abel as effects were being prepared for STAR TREK: THE MOVIE. There wasn't much for him to do there. Robert Abel's group was the vanguard of computer innovation. The business changed rapidly. On the plus-side, there were old friends. Fred Crippen had been at Ernest Pintoff Productions during Glasser's first time around there. Crippen had followed Pintoff from UPA in Hollywood. Fred Crippen next went to Terrytoons as part of the Deitch crew.

Fred Crippen transplanted to L.A. in 1958 and founded Pantomime Pictures. I've read they created the jaunty photo-montage TV ad for JFK's 1960 campaign. Pantomime provided a cartoon sequence for 1962's STAN FRIEBERG PRESENTS CHINESE NEW YEAR SPECIAL on ABC. Bill Hurtz coordinated the animation. Saul Bass did Production Design for the whole show. STAN FRIEBERG PRESENTS CHINESE NEW YEAR SPECIAL is a fun watch. Then Pantomime Pictures broke out big in 1964 with the sophomoric LINUS THE LIONHEARTED and in 1965 with ROGER RAMJET. Lots of teleblurbs. During 1969 Pantomime had two shows in production: HOT WHEELS and SKYHAWKS, as well as some SESAME STREET bits. From 1973-79 Crippen worked at Hanna-Barbera. In 1981 Pantomime Pictures was at 12144 Riverside Drive in North Hollywood. Crippen and Glasser teamed-up for a few SESAME STREET segments. NAME THAT FOOD and DANCING DOG are prime examples. Len Glasser actually voiced the singing dog who wants to be an alligator.

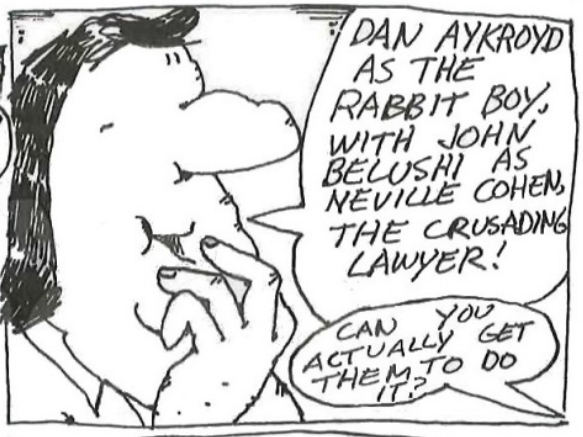
Glasser started illustrating an ongoing comic strip titled THE RABBIT BOY for NATIONAL LAMPOON Magazine. It ran for a year-and-a-half. Steven Spielberg's Amblyn Entertainment got interested in Rabbit Boy and had Glasser write a screenplay. Amblyn brought it to Columbia Pictures, the movie never got past development stages.

THE RABBIT BOY

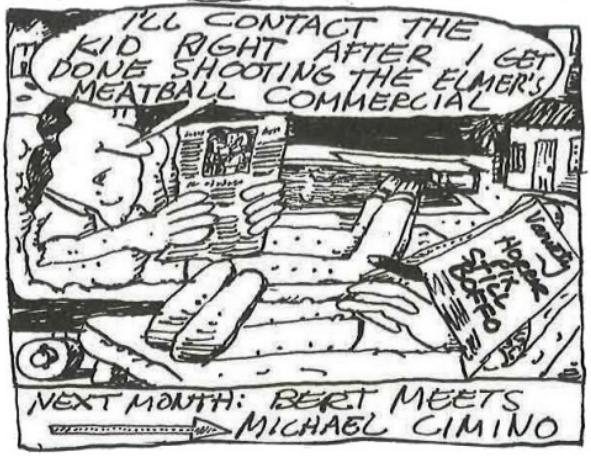
by Len Glasser
© 1981


CHAPTER 9
Los Angeles Times EXTRA
HOLLYWOOD
RABBIT BOY FOILS PRISON BREAK
"IN AN UNPRECEDENTED ACT OF HEROISM, A MAJOR PRISON RIOT WAS QUELLED BY A BOY WHO REPUTEDLY WAS RAISED BY WILD RABBITS."

DO YOU REALIZE THIS IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF STORY I NEED TO GET OUT OF THE TOILET AFTER "HEAVEN GATE"?
WHO DO YOU SEE IN IT IF YOU COULD DO IT, MIKE?



NO PROBLEM! DON'T FORGET THEY WENT INTO THE CRAPPER AFTER "THE BLUES BROTHERS." THOSE TWO NEED A PICTURE AS BADLY AS I DO! OF COURSE I'LL WRITE THE SCRIPT!


I'LL CONTACT THE KID RIGHT AFTER I GET DONE SHOOTING THE ELMER'S MEATBALL COMMERCIAL
HORRIBLE PIX STILL BOFFO
NEXT MONTH: BERT MEETS MICHAEL CIMINO

Fred Wolf handled Glasser's sample reel in Hollywood, but Wolf had trouble finding enough work for himself. Duane Crowther got Glasser in at Duck Soup Productions in Santa Monica. Duck Soup's owner Lee Mishkin was pleased that Glasser brought several Cheerios spots with him, which he designed and directed with Crowther animating. Back in New York, Sydel Solomon finished out her career as a Checker on THE SOLDIER'S TALE at The Ink Tank.

Vince Cafarelli was entangled in the politics of Perpetual Motion Pictures. When Buzz Potamkin formed Buzzco at 870 Seventh Avenue in 1982, Cafarelli went with him as a Creative Director. Potamkin also carried off the Berenstain Bears account along with Joe Sedellmaier's son JJ, who was then an Assistant Animator. Bob Staats joined Buzzco as a Producer. Staats told JJ Sedelmaier many stories about Len Glasser. JJ hoped to work with the dude someday.

1987 marked Len Glasser's thirtieth year in the film business. The rollicking days of individualistic expression were past. Animation homogenized. Based on his own idea, Len Glasser typed away on the screenplay for a feature film titled OUT COLD. Braunstein and Hamady Productions gave it the green-light. Terri Garr, John Lithgow, and Randy Quade starred. OUT COLD played in theaters during 1988 to favorable reviews. I just watched it, 36 years later, and it holds up nicely.

Animation called Glasser back to freelancing for Marvel Productions and Ruby-Spears' GEM . . . titles, layouts, Timing Director . . . bills got paid. REAL DOG STORIES, a TV series he pitched to Universal, earned him a few dollars as a writer in 1992, but never got made.

DiC Productions in Burbank, a part of the conglomerat incorporating DiC Entertainment and DiC Enterprises, hired Glasser in 1993 to do story boards for half-a-dozen episodes of THE ADVENTURES OF SONIC THE HEDGEHOG. Based in France, DiC started out buying up rights to thousands of hours of American animation in 1971. While animators were engaged in a heated dispute with their union during 1982, DiC swooped in to open a Hollywood branch, taking advantage of the unrest. A year later DiC was producing INSPECTOR GADGET for CBS. They paid scale-minimum for scripts and layouts. Animation was done overseas.

DiC rolled out the shows:; THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS; DENNIS THE MENACE; HELLO KITTY'S FURRY TALE THEATER; THE NEW ADVENTURES OF BEANY AND CECIL; CAPTAIN PLANET AND THE PLANETEERS; HAMMERMAN; SAILOR MOON; and in 1993 this Sonic the Hedgehog thing, co-owned by Sega Corporation. Commerce had made Art its bitch!

A dozen years after those fun SESAME STREET pieces he'd done with Len Glasser, Fred Crippen was Animation Timer on THE ADVENTURES OF SONIC THE HEDGEHOG. For me this is akin to some TV Western's once-proud lawman sweeping out stables. Since those 1981 PBS spots, Crippen did projects with Bosustow Entertainment, Disney, CBS, and Hearst Entertainment. 1991 brought back some of the old spirit when Pantomime Pictures supplied THE PROFESSIONALS to MTV's LIQUID TELEVISION. Then Crippen got involved with DiC and staued until retiring around 2001.

Glasser couldn't bring himself to do it and returned to Hanna-Barbera in 1994 as a Writer/Storyboard Artist on SECRET SQUIRREL. A company called Modern Cartoons hired him in 1995 to

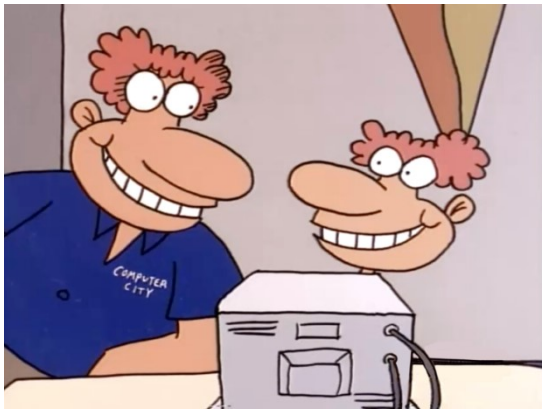
direct intersitials for a 24 hour a day Satellite Bingo Channel available on C-Band. Those intersitials were done using motion-capture animation, a developing technology. Len Glasser had only the vaguest understanding of this new 'mo-cap', but couldn't afford to turn down a job. An actor put on a suit lined with sensors. Glasser directed the actor, whose motion was captured into a computer, and rendered as a talking dog.

At the time Glasser was trying to find backers for DICK THE ANIMAL, an animated series about a rabbit named Dick who's "a weirdo in a world of norms". Dick is befriended by a terrible stand-up comic. Glasser prepared model sheets, scripts, and storyboards. No backers appeared. He did sell his screenplay for the feature film MOJAVE MOON to the Initial Entertainment Group. Anne Archer, Danny Aiello, Angelina Jolie, and Alfred Molina starred. Glasser wanted to direct, but they brought in some other guy. MOJAVE MOON came out in 1996. So did the Björk music video I MISS YOU.

Spümcø created I MISS YOU. Director John Kricfalusi, being a fan, invited Len Glasser onto the project as Animation Supervisor and Timing Director. In an era when animation was becoming confectionary, Kricfalusi's gang resurrected the sense of irreverence Glasser established. Or is it anti-established?

At that time Glasser lived in the Los Angeles suburb of Sherman Oaks, right around the corner from Pablo Ferro. Pablo enlisted him for some film titles. Glasser was a Designer for the titles on MEN IN BLACK and ANNA KARININA. He also directed the title sequence for ANNA KARININA. Mel Gibson put millions of dollars into that movie. Much of it was actually shot on location in Russia. In keeping with the epicness afoot, Glasser scanned actual historical documents to set the titles against, working out a complex effect. He really busted his hump. So, the studio cut the movie down by 32 minutes, and scrapped Glasser's classy titles for something more practical.

Ferro left our hero alone to create the titles for BOOGIE NIGHTS. Much of 1997 passed at Klasky/Csupo as a Timing Director on RUGRATS, keeping track of others' creative efforts. Nothing exciting to tell there. The fun came with a call from JJ Sedelmaier in 1998. Computer City wanted JJ Sedelmaier Productions to fashion a memorable teleblurb. Glasser flew from Sherman Oaks to White Plains. His reception was a standing ovation from Sedelmaier's crew. They made a good commercial that won Glasser an award for design at the Amsterdam Film Festival.



In JJ's own words:

> I was lucky enough to work with Len on a :30 Computer City commercial. I honestly can't remember how we originally got together, but I'm pretty sure it was because I'd become such a big fan of the "Safety Shoes" industrial film I'd seen thanks to Bob Staats and Vinny Cafarelli. Lenny and I had become long distance pals and we'd been trying to figure out how we could meet face to face, let alone collaborate on a project together. An ad agency friend of mine had a project for Computer City that he was developing, but it was supposed to be a live action commercial. He and I talked more about it, and it was clear that an animation approach could make the concept even better, and that Lenny was perfect for it They loved the Glasser quirky style – the design felt refreshingly new even though Lenny had been working in a similar variation of it for years. The best part was that Lenny was able to visit the east coast, including our studio in White Plains, and hang with all of us throughout pre-production. Everyone, from the client to the ad agency, and especially all of us in the studio, were very happy with the cartoon. Unfortunately, it aired only once or twice before Computer City was sold to CompUSA and the spot evaporated into the ether. Really too bad.

When Buzzco developed the animated TV series pilot LARRY & LASLO in 1999, Glasser wore four big hats – Writer, Producer, Director, and Designer. The spontaneity of East Coast animation, that hyper-*kismet* in a New York minute mentality, had given way to a more cautious corporate double-check mind-frame. LARRY & LASLO terminated during development.

Isle of Capri Casinos were expanding rapidly outward from their St. Louis roots in 2001. They were in talks with Universal Studios TV division about doing a show. Len Glasser wrote the pilot episode. The show never got made.

Len Glasser's next attempt came in 2004, and it was writing an animated series called ROBOMAILMAN. Obviously, it would be about a robot delivering mail. Alas, another fine wine died on the vine. Glasser shot a ten minute film titled HOWARD & SOLANGE about marital unrest. Glasser's art-dealer Zack Norman was in it. Zack Norman had also been in MOJAVE MOON. Zack Norman produced dozens of movies. He'd won the 1974 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. Now Norman and Glasser made some non-corporate art, just because.

In honor of that old-school moxie, Amid Amidi hosted a retrospective of Leonard Glasser's animated films at the American Film Institute. In preparation Amidi posted:

> **All of the films we'll be screening are extremely difficult to see nowadays so don't miss this rare opportunity to experience Len's distinctive and hilarious style of filmmaking. Len started in animation at Terrytoons working on TOM TERRIFIC, and shortly thereafter he designed Ernie Pintoff's award-winning shorts THE OLD MAN AND THE FLOWER and THE INTERVIEW. In the early-'60s, he started his own studio, Stars & Stripes Productions Forever, where he produced some of the funniest and most imaginative animated commercials of the Sixties and Seventies. The screening will include a lot of TV commercials, Glasser's own animated short HOWARD, the industrial film SAFETY SHOES which surely ranks as one of the goofiest industrials ever made, and the X-rated animation sequence from the 1971 cult classic THE TELEPHONE BOOK.**

In 2009 Glasser pitched CARBONN, a show about the fiercest of hit-men. Carbonn would be portrayed by David Proval, best

known as Richie Aprile on THE SOPRANOS. David Proval appeared in many movies and TV shows. Notable here is the voice work he did for Ralph Bakshi, playing Peace in WIZARDS (1977) and Crazy Shapiro in HEY GOOD LOOKIN' (1982). Len Glasser knew a lot of interesting people.

I connected with Len Glasser during his final days. He was in the hospital and extremely bored, so we talked at length. The man told me stories about the free-wheeling days in New York. My favorite: leaving his therapist's office one afternoon Glasser spotted Fred Mogubgub eating an ice-cream cone at a Times Square street corner. Mogubgub wore only a bathing suit, sandals, and a P-coat. When Glasser explained he was coming from a therapy session, Mogubgub said: "Ahh, why pay that guy? Give me the money. I'll be your shrink!". Glasser declined the offer. Those freewheeling days of youth.

Around 2010 Glasser eased up, giving an occasional talk or sculpting for Art in the Park, and paying bills like everyone else. Any balance between art and commerce is tricky. This guy Glasser arrived on the scene as the conservative 1950s gave way the radical 1960s and prospered in that atmosphere, blending art and commerce. The contentious 1970s watergated our nation's soul. Corporate-lameness ruled the roost in the 1980s while Glasser re-envisioned himself into a Hollywood screenwriter. Talk about a therapy session! He tore into it through the peculiar 1990s, hanging out with Pablo Ferro. Glasser made it creatively into the 21st Century, where no Buck Rogers flying cars awaited. Fanny packs, not jetpacks.

Len Glasser passed on as I was finishing this article. At this point all I can say is "Dog bless Stars & Stripes Productions Forever, and ever, and ever . . ."

Vita breve, ars longa.

SHINE ON, YOU CRAZY DIAMOND !